

# Notable Updates for COVID-19

August 2022

## FACT SHEET: Oral Antivirals

### Molnupiravir

#### Category of medication:

Oral antiviral medication for the treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19.

#### **Current Dosing Guidance for Molnupiravir:**

**\*This medication has been approved in the UK 11/2021 and received US FDA emergency use authorization on December 23, 2021.**

**Dose: 800 mg by mouth twice daily for five days.**

#### Mechanism of action:

Molnupiravir works by introducing errors in the process by which the cells of a person infected with SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) virus replicate the virus's genome (the virus's RNA). The drug prevents the activity of the enzymes that normally work to 'proof-read' and correct the copied RNA sequence. Since the virus has to replicate its RNA in order to replicate within the infected individual or to spread to other vulnerable people, this drug causes the virus to become unable to reproduce.

#### Efficacy:

In the MOVE-OUT trial, Molnupiravir reduced the rate of hospitalization or death by 30% compared to placebo.<sup>1</sup> Common drug-drug interactions with steroids/HIV/TB/malaria medications not yet identified.

#### Common Adverse Effects

The most common adverse effects of molnupiravir are diarrhea, nausea, and dizziness.

<sup>1</sup> [Molnupiravir | COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines \(nih.gov\)](https://www.nih.gov/news-events/press-releases/studies-show-molnupiravir-reduces-risk-hospitalization-death-covid-19)

## Considerations for Pregnant & Sexually Active Individuals

Clinicians should assess a patient's pregnancy status before initiating molnupiravir, if clinically indicated. Currently, **Molnupiravir is not recommended for use during pregnancy.**

Patients of childbearing potential should be counseled about abstaining from sex or using reliable contraception for the duration of therapy and for up to 4 days after receiving molnupiravir. Reproductive toxicity has been reported in animal studies of molnupiravir, and molnupiravir may be mutagenic during pregnancy.

### **CONTRAINDICATIONS for Molnupiravir:**

- Age <18
- Pregnancy
- Severe COVID-19 illness requiring hospitalization

### **INDICATIONS for Molnupiravir:**

- For treatment of adults (>18 years) with mild to moderate COVID-19
- Within 5 days of symptom onset
- At high risk of progressing to severe disease
- Alternative antiviral therapies are not accessible or clinically appropriate.

The FDA EUA states that men of reproductive potential who are sexually active with individuals of childbearing potential should be counseled to abstain from sex or use a reliable method of contraception for the duration of treatment **and for at least 3 months after the last dose of molnupiravir.**

### **RISE Project Overview**

Reaching Impact, Saturation, and Epidemic Control (RISE) is a 5-year global project funded by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) which works with countries to achieve a shared vision of attaining and maintaining epidemic control, with stronger local partners capable of managing and achieving results through sustainable, self-reliant, and resilient health systems by 2024.

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